

Hillandale

News

No 198 June 1994



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Hillandale News

The Official Journal of The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society

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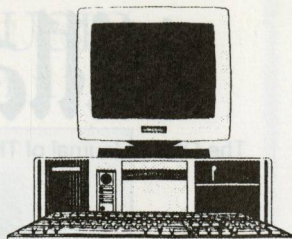
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Front cover illustration: Dame Clara Butt. See John D. Phillips' article on page 49

EDITOR'S DESK



C.L.P.G.S. Survey

After an initial scan through the forms you have sent in it is clear that many members would like more articles on machines. I agree with this as this would provide a better balance of articles in *Hillandale News*. Ever since I assumed the editorial chair I have tried to cajole, implore and pressgang likely experts and enthusiasts to write some articles on machines. I have met with only limited success. Would anyone help to fill the breach? If any of you out there want to help please contact me.

June Meeting

For this meeting Bridget Duckenfield, the author of *O Lovely Knight* (a biography of Sir Landon Ronald) will be talking on *The Many Sides of Landon Ronald*. Landon Ronald was the Musical Director of The Gramophone Company Ltd. He joined them in the early days and made recordings with many of the great artistes of the days before the second world war. I am sure that after a visit to hear Bridget on June 16th the reader will have learnt a lot more about this important figure from the time when the gramophone record developed from a toy into a full-blown educational and entertainment medium.

August Meeting

Unfortunately Allen Debus has such a busy schedule for his visit to Europe that he is unable to be in London at the time of the August Meeting, so he will be unable to give his talk. Fortunately Dominic Combe has agreed to fill the breach and will give a programme with cylinders. Full details will be given in the next issue.

Frank Lambert

Aaron Cramer has written with a couple of vital points he omitted from his article on Frank Lambert in the last issue. The first concerns what is on the recording. It is Frank Lambert announcing the hours of the day with a French accent. The second is the outstanding work done by sound engineer and collector Peter Dilg. It is evident that without Peter the recording could not have been played back without further damage to the metal sleeve.

Please note that material intended for inclusion in *Hillandale News* must reach the Editor not later than **six weeks before the first day of the month of issue**.

Hence the deadline for the **August** issue will be **15th June 1994**.

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Views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor.

THE BRITISH RECORD INDUSTRY DURING THE REIGN OF KING EDWARD VII: 1901 - 1910

by Frank Andrews

Part 1

This series of articles is a fuller version of the programme I presented at the August 1991 Society Meeting in Neasden. At that meeting I was assisted by Len Watts (who worked the slide-projector) and Ted Matthews (who operated the turntable and amplification equipment).

Queen Victoria died on 21st January 1901. She was succeeded by her eldest son Edward, Prince of Wales, who became King Edward VII. Although Edward's reign lasted a mere ten years it seemed, in the light of the turbulent years that followed, to have been for many an idyllic period, the height of summer of Empire, before the clouds of war destroyed it.

The talking machine industry, which was still restricted in growth by some yet to expire phonograph and graphophone patents (all but one the property of the Edison Bell Consolidated Phonograph Co. Ltd.), expanded immeasurably within the first three years of Edward's reign. This expansion was beyond all comparison with what had been achieved in the closing years of the nineteenth century.

E. Berliner's Gramophone

The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. had been established only six weeks when Queen Victoria died. Both its recording room and machine assembly rooms were at 31, Maiden Lane, London W.C. the home of its predecessor in business The Gramophone Company. The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. had only one product on sale at that time, the 7" E. Berliner's Gramophone single-sided record. The

gramophones it sold were assembled in London from parts sent over from Eldridge Johnson's factory in Camden, New Jersey, USA.

The first 10" diameter Berliner Record was recorded in April 1901. When first offered for sale (around November 1901), the discs bore black paper labels, printed in gold. These records were styled **Gramophone Concert Record**. A few early discs were pressed as **Berliners**.

In 1901, The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. controlled a number of overseas companies. These companies were located in France, Italy and Germany. Deutsche Grammophon AG, the German company, pressed all the discs for the Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd.'s companies at its factory in Hanover. [7" Berliner 6331, *British Patrol*, banjo duet by Clarke and Earle was played.]

Zonophone Record

Except for the child's disc Graphophone, with its vertical-cut small discs from the Columbia Graphophone Co. General's London branch, no other disc record manufacturer was operating in Britain. However, Zonophone Records, along with the New Zonophone machines, were being imported through Frederick Marion Prescott, export agent for the National Gramophone Corporation of New York. To counter this competition, in May 1901, The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. tried to prevent the import of Zonophone goods by registering the trade name Zon-o-phone, to itself. The very month Gramophone and Typewriter took

this action, the International Zonophone Company was incorporated in New York, and opened its German selling branch and manufactory in Berlin. The Berlin factory produced the first 10" Zonophone Records. These records were single-sided recordings which were put on sale in September together with 7" and 9" size records imported from America. The American end of the business did not yet have a 10" Zonophone other than those exported from Germany.

American Talking Machine Record Disk and Vitaphone Talking Machine Record

Vitaphone machines and disc records were the products of the American Talking Machine Co. and were the first disc records to be licensed by the Columbia interest in America under the protection of the Bell/Tainter patents (which did not expire until 1903). Machines and records, like the later Zonophones, were exported to Europe and again, as with Zonophone, The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. registered the trade name **Vitaphone** in a number of countries (but curiously not in the U.K.) in an attempt to minimise the competition from the American Talking Machine Company's products. I believe it to be the case that the Columbia licence was only for a limited amount of Vitaphone products, for in May 1900, a cross licensing agreement was entered into with Zonophone's proprietors, giving them the exclusive rights to produce the Zonophone machines and discs, under the protection of Columbia patents.

Vitaphone records were made under the Joseph W. Jones process. Jones was a one-time laboratory assistant employed by Emile Berliner, when both were employed by the Berliner Gramophone Company in America. With Columbia's protection gone, Jones sailed for Europe. Discs were made in the U.S.A. for sale in Europe under the

style of **European Vitaphone Co. Disk or Vitaphone Talking Machine Record - Process of Joseph W. Jones**. Albert T. Armstrong, another American, was associated in the U.S.A. with the machine and recording side of the business.

Initially, all Vitaphone discs (from 1898) were red in colour; other colours have also been reported. All had inscribed centres and were 7" single-sided records. At some time, in late 1901 or early 1902, Armstrong took over the business. He also claimed to be the successor of the National Gramophone Corporation of America; which had failed in September 1901. Armstrong based his claim on having the sole sales agency for Zonophone products in the U.S.A. and Europe. He re-named the business the **American Vitaphone Co.** The Company offices were at 165 West 23rd Street, New York. Armstrong's records were styled the same, having red labels printed in gold. In addition, his records were marked **London** as well as **New York** on the labels. Armstrong was later sued by Eldridge Johnson for dubbing **Victor Records** and he was enjoined from doing so by an American court on October 4th 1904. However, he died before the suit was concluded. [No example of any Vitaphone was played at Neasden.]

Cylinder Records during 1901

It was the expiry of the Bell/Tainter wax cutting process patent, in May 1900, which enabled the Columbia Phonograph Co. General to establish its European headquarters in London, transferring it from Paris the day after the relevant patent expired. Offices were set up in Wells St., off Oxford Street. The Paris office was subsequently reduced to merely the French branch of the business. France, through historical circumstances involving the Edison United Phonograph Co. of Newark, N.J. and London, had no important outstanding phonograph or gramophone patents. The

Views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the British Phonographic Society

reason for this was Edison United's failure to work those they held. Consequently, under French law, they went into the public domain, allowing the Pathé brothers to establish their concern six years earlier, and to dominate the French market through its machine and cylinder trade.

When Columbia opened their London headquarters, they were immediately served with a writ by Edison Bell for infringement of its Edison patents relating to taper mandrels and taper bores in cylinders which were an integral part of Columbia's Graphophones and cylinder records. Columbia were also mistakenly sued by Edison Bell over its Graphophone Grand for which the Columbia companies of America owned a patent. Columbia riposted by suing Edison Bell for its selling Edison Concert Phonographs as infringers of its patents.¹

Because Edison Bell had bought from the Edison United Phonograph Co. in 1892 the then extant Edison phonograph patents, Thomas A. Edison's American company was unable to sell Edison products in Britain. This situation remained until 1903, when the British patents expired. Edison Bell's own cylinders, at the beginning of 1901, were still announced as **London Records**. This was a carry-over from the time when J. E. Hough's London Phonograph Company was transformed into Edisonia Limited and became the cylinder manufacturing arm of Edison Bell. During 1901, the records began to be announced as **Edison Bell Record**. These cylinders were recorded at three studios in Banner Street, London E.C. Edison Bell, whose patents gave them complete control of the phonograph side of the talking machine industry in Britain, allowed others to trade under licence. These licences enabled the Company to reap a royalty. Edison, Columbia and other American makes of records became accessible in Britain through this arrangement, together with machines and records from Europe, especially Germany and France (Pathé goods).

One company which attempted to broaden the cylinder manufacturing side of the industry was the **New Century Phonograph Company**, belonging to Waterfield, Clifford and Co. Ltd. This Company later became well known as duplicators of other makes of cylinder records, although they also had own recordings. Stephen C. Porter, an American singer, comedian and recording expert, is known to have been employed in London by New Century, both as artist and as recording expert.

The expanding factoring and retailing traders - the result of Gramophone and Typewriter's increased production and the licensing of various businesses by Edison Bell - is revealed by the advertisements which appeared in the pages of *Bazaar, Exchange and Mart* during 1901.

Advertisers in *Bazaar, Exchange and Mart* during 1901

The Edison Bell and Edisonia business had - since 1898 - been selling the Edison Standard Phonograph for 6 guineas, and prior to September 1900, the key-wind Edison Gem (a machine capable of recording) selling for 3 guineas. Furthermore, for the 1900-1901 season, the Edison Concert Phonograph, taking 5" diameter cylinders, had been reduced from £36 to £30. Prior to 1900, Edison Bell had other machines: the coin-in-the-slot Automatic Phonograph, which sold for 10 guineas and the Combination A.1 Grand, which was a graphophone (with open works motor) capable of playing both small and large cylinders and which sold for 16 guineas. Also available for the 1900-1901 season were Edison Bell's records reduced in price: the five-inch recordings from 15 to 12 shillings, the first quality **new process** to 8 shillings and the blank cylinders 9 shillings to 5 shillings. Small masters sold for 5 shillings each, reduced to 4s. 2d. if ordered by the dozen. The first quality **new process** were priced at 2s. 6d. each - the same price as a Berliner disc - but only 2s. 1d. if bought by the dozen.

With the remaining patents due to expire over the next two years or so, Edison Bell in March 1901 advertised its Twentieth Century Phonograph at only 18s. 6d. each, fully guaranteed and licensed.

In February 1901, **The Acme Phonograph** of Holborn, E.C. advertised *Phonographs with Grand Concert Records - The Most Distinctive Sound on the Market* at only 6 guineas.

W. G. Bradt, of Wolverhampton, claimed to be *The Depot for genuine Edison and Columbia phonograph records and accessories*, and in March 1901 was operating an easy payments scheme with both large and small records available. He offered the Edison Combination Phonograph at 12 guineas, with other machines from 25 shillings each.

The Excelsior Piano Co. of Bradford, Yorkshire had for over a year been advertising *Factory Prices - Genuine Gramophones and Edison Phonographs with, or without, penny-in-the-slot mechanisms - All Prices - The Genuine Articles - Beware of Imitations - Descriptive catalogues and records lists, post free*. This advertisement ran all through 1901.

Imhof and Mukle of New Oxford Street, London had been advertising the gramophone since the beginning of the trade, describing it between 1898 and 1900 as *The Wonder of the Nineteenth Century*. However, in January 1901 it became *The Wonder of the Twentieth Century*. This business was also selling the German-made Krefeld Phonographs which were stated to be the cheapest available. The Mignon A sold at 18s., the Mignon B at 24s. and the Mignon C, which could record as well as reproduce, cost £1 15s. and larger machines were at increased prices.

The Inventors and Industrial Trust Ltd. of High Holborn, London were operating a record exchange for phonographs with a 6d. fee for each record exchanged.

Messrs. Mayer and Co. of Chiswick, Middlesex had been advertising since February 1899 as a licensed firm of Edison Bell. In 1901 they were stockists of all models from the Edison Works, Columbia Graphophones, also of Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd.'s Gramophones and records to suit. By December 1899 they were advertising their own **Multiphone** machines, specially made for them. These were cylinder machines and sold from between £36 and £50. *Bazaar, Exchange and Mart* featured this machine as "*The most wonderful machine we have ever heard*"; the records were priced at 17s. 6d. with blanks at 9s. each. These machines were quite likely the same as Edison Concert Grands. In March 1901 Mayer and Co., besides offering new diaphragms in a handsome case for Graphophones at one guinea, or another with trumpet complete at 35s., also advertised (to users of Columbia Graphophones) their new attachments which took 5" Grand Records and which could attached in a few seconds, priced at £4. 10s. Machines were also advertised. In June they advertised Grand Concert machines, a magnificent new model, priced at 6 guineas. In 1902, this firm changed its name to the Multiphone Company.

A **Mr Paxman** from Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire had an interesting advert in which he appealed for a **Howe** phonograph, having an **Express** phonograph and eight records for sale.

In their advertisements, **The Phonograph and Record Exchange** of Berners Street, Oxford Street, London claimed to be the largest dealers in Phonographs, Graphophones and Gramophones buying, selling, exchanging and letting out on hire. They had hundreds of machines in stock, from as little as 15s. and together with thousands of records. Records could be exchanged and second-hand records sold for 10s. per dozen. Easy terms were available.

The Sanoepre Indestructible Diaphragms, for both recording and reproducing, were on sale in 1901. Its Scottish owners claimed it had a remarkable superiority over all makes. The Sanoepre Sound-Box for disc machines eventually became the property of Nicole Frères, who at this juncture were stockists for Edison Phonographs and of the Gramophone, but who later on switched to the European Zonophone machines and records as they became available later in the 1901-1902 season.

Nicole Frères Ltd. were regular advertisers in the same paper.

Mr T. W. Suter's Electrical Works of South Tottenham, London N., aside from stocking Gramophones and needles, also advertised they were willing to purchase broken disc records. What did they do with those? Melt them down for insulating materials?

Additional American Influences on the British Talking Machine Scene

I have already remarked on the fact that Vitaphone and Zonophone machines and records were directly imported into Britain (albeit in small quantities), before the International Zonophone began production in Berlin; that Columbia had opened offices in London and that Steve C. Porter was here as a recording expert. However, I have not mentioned that Edison Bell's expert was another American, Russell Hunting. Hunting was already famous for his artistic work as Michael Casey, which he originated in America on his own cylinder recordings. He had also been the first editor of *The Phonoscope*, one of America's first independent trade journals for the talking machine business. Events in America during 1901 added further to the American influence on the existing British trade.

When the National Gramophone Corporation failed in September 1901 - having been in difficulties since the spring - the Interna-

tional Zonophone had already been founded in America by F. M. Prescott and the manufacturers, the Universal Talking Machine Co. (Prescott was already in Germany with some American recording experts by the end of May). The failure of the sole sales agent in America brought a temporary halt to Zonophone sales there. The manufacturer of these records was the Burt Company of America. The three Burt brothers were nominally in the business of billiards balls, pool balls and poker chips manufacture; although George H. Burt had a contract with Emile Berliner (later modified) to supply him with a record composition. Emile Berliner preferred Burt's pressings to those of the Duranoid people. Burt's formula was sent to Joseph Berliner in Hanover where he later modified it. It is unlikely that the Burt Company had a contract with the Berliner Company of America, but it is known that the Zonophone Records were pressed by Burt. When sales stopped, the Burt Company had a workshop with matrices ready for pressing. To fill the gap in production, Burt formed the Globe Record Company as a sub-division and began producing the labelless Climax Record which Columbia began to stock. Columbia had stocked the Zonophones under the licensing agreement of 17 months earlier. The first Climax discs were issued during either October or November 1901.

In January 1902 the Victor Talking Machine Company bought the Globe Record Co. from the Burt Company and contracted it to also press some Victor records as well. By keeping the Climax discs in production, Victor (which was not in too sound a position as regards Columbia's patents) ensured a continuation of its records and machines business. Johnson also struck a deal with Columbia, one of the considerations being that with the sale of the Globe record business to Columbia, Victor would not be harassed over patents infringements in the future. The sale took place four

weeks later, and thus the Climax record came into the full possession of Columbia.

In the meanwhile, George Henry Burt had come to England to start up a British enterprise in the thermo-plastic industry, similar to that of the Burt Company of America. It was here, in July 1901, that his **Crystallate Manufacturing Co. Ltd.** was registered. Burt submitted the word Crystallate for registration of trade marks in two classes of merchandise.

Thus at the opening of the 1901-1902 season in October 1901 The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. found itself faced with its first established disc competition in Europe in the Zonophone, with Nicole Frères Ltd. appointed as a British agent, and by December with Columbia handling the Climax Record through its branches in Europe.

On the cylinder side, although the New Century Co. no longer advertised - it had received a writ for infringement from Edison Bell - a new business was operating under the partners, Lucock and Packman, trading from Shepherds Bush, Hammersmith London W. recording, making and selling their **Pioneer Record**. [At this point, to mark the close of 1901, 10" Zonophone X-2328 *A Country Girl* - Selection by the Zonophone String Orchestra and Climax 338 *Honey-suckle and the Bee* by the Climax Orchestra and violin were played.]

An important development on the cylinder front was the Edison Bell Consolidated Phonograph Company Limited liquidating itself. The Company sold the business to a new venture with the same name but with different backers. This new company was no longer connected to the Edison United Phonograph Co. which had been responsible for founding the Edison Bell business back in 1892, when it transferred its British Edison and British Bell-Tainter patents to the new company, at the same time becoming its sole supplier of machines and

records from the Edison Works - the manufacturing company in America.

The original Bell-Tainter Graphophone was no longer in production at that period and it was not until 1894 that the radically different Graphophones were put into production.

This new Edison Bell Company of December 1901 faced the immediate prospect that its patent for a tapered mandrel was due to expire in March 1902. This meant that the field would be soon open to others to make cylinder records without the necessity of taking out a licence from Edison Bell. Some less important features of phonograph construction remained, such as the patented half-nuts for the feed-screws and patented cam levers, but they had only a life of two years expiring in November 1903.

Notes:

- 1 The outcome of these disputes is given in my book *Edison Phonograph - The British Connection* (London 1987)

To be continued

Canadian Antique Phonograph Society

The interests of the 250 members of the Canadian Antique Phonograph Society (CAPS) range across all aspects of sound recording and its history: phonographs and gramophones, all types of sound recordings of historic importance, and related memorabilia. There is particular emphasis placed on the history of recorded sound in Canada.

Membership, which includes a 6-issue subscription to CAPS newsletter, **Antique Phonograph News**, costs \$20.00 U.S. per year. The Society meets on a regular basis, currently eight times a year between September and June, in Toronto and Oshawa, Ontario. Each meeting attracts more than 50 members and guests, and includes a presentation on one aspect or another of recorded-sound history and an auction of a wide variety of sound machines, recordings and related artifacts. Please contact: **Bill Pratt, Treasurer, Canadian Antique Phonograph Society,** [redacted] Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2L2, CANADA

DAME CLARA BUTT

BRITAIN'S GREAT CONTRALTO

by John D. Phillips

In the bleak and desolate surroundings of the condemned cell at Nottingham Jail sat a morose prisoner. Neither speaking nor eating he had refused all attempts at solicitation and help to make peace with God.

In the cold early hours on the morning of execution, as the first beams of sunlight cast shadows across his prison cell, a voice of immeasurable beauty and intonation rang like a golden bell throughout those forbidding walls. It was singing *O Rest in the Lord, Wait Patiently for Him* (from Mendelssohn's *Elijah*). The man clutching his Bible with tears in his eyes, opened it for the first time. His anguish would soon come to an end, and to the glorious sound of *Abide with Me* he was led away.

This was no part from a melodramatic opera, this was no ordinary voice, the scene was appropriate. The singer was Clara Butt.

Clara Ellen Butt was born at Southwick near Brighton in Sussex on 1st February 1873. She was the offspring of a runaway marriage. Her mother Clara Hook was the daughter of a Shoreham boat-builder. A family rift was caused when she married at the age of sixteen Henry Butt, a captain in the Mercantile Marine. The family sailed off to Jersey, where the skipper's family lived. Mrs Butt frequently accompanied her husband on many of his sea travels. It was while their ship was cruising off the Sussex coast, that a hasty landing became necessary. They put into port at the small fishing village of Southwick and there at 4, Adur Terrace, Clara Butt was born.

Clara's great-great-grandfather on her mother's side can be traced back to Theod-

ore Hook. In the early part of the nineteenth century he earned the dubious reputation a practical joker. He did however, have a serious side, and was for a time editor of the paper *John Bull*. He also wrote numerous books and plays which seem to have faded into obscurity.

The Butts returned to Jersey, and after seven years, with an increased family, they moved to Bristol in 1880. It was here at the age of twelve that Clara's voice, at first mistaken for that of a boy, was noticed by her headmistress Mrs Cook. On her recommendation the young Miss Butt became a student of Mr Dan Rootham, the organist at St.Peter's Church and conductor of the Bristol Festival Choir. She could not have been placed in safer hands. He was eventually able to prepare her for the entrance exam at the Royal College of Music in which she won an open scholarship in 1889.

On the 7th December 1892 at 19 she made a magnificent professional début as Ursula in Sullivan's *The Golden Legend* at the Royal Albert Hall. This event predated by three days her amateur début in a college production of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* at the Lyceum Theatre in the title rôle. These performances attracted the attention of Queen Victoria, who after hearing her sing at Windsor was sufficiently impressed to pay for a three month's study course at Duvernoy, Paris.

Later a period of instruction followed with Jacques Bouhy, and the Hungarian singer Etelka Gerster, who herself was a pupil of Marchesi. It was from Mme Gerster that

Clara acquired her command of coloratura, surprising in such a large dark voice. The clarity of her diction is in part the result of studies with Clara Novello-Davies (mother of Ivor Novello). During these years much experience was gained singing with the Bristol Festival Choir, and taking part in the Handel Triennial Festival at the Crystal Palace. She was in great demand for concert appearances and for 'at home' gatherings throughout the country.

It was many years before Clara Butt consented to make gramophone records. She felt with some justification that the quality of reproduction would not do justice to her voice. However it is known that she made a recording for The Gramophone Company in 1899. *Night Hymn at Sea* by Goring Thomas recorded in January 1899 was issued on Berliner 4054. In July 1909, after much persuasion and when her voice was in its absolute prime, she made a series of recordings, 18 of which were issued on single-sided Gramophone Monarch discs. These included two duet discs with her husband, Kennerley Rumford, a cultured baritone, whom she married at Bristol Cathedral in June 1900. Sir Arthur Sullivan, who through ill health was unable to attend, composed an anthem especially for the occasion. It is an interesting fact that he was also working on an opera (St. Cecilia) for Clara when he died. So far as is known it was never completed, and though a careful search was made, the manuscript was never found.

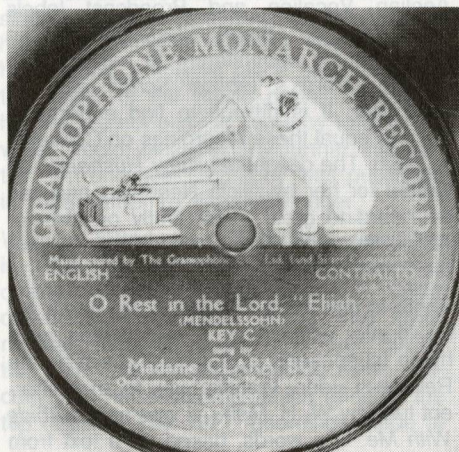
Listening to recordings of her voice reveal an exceptional range and power; C below middle to high B flat, over 3½ octaves - a true contralto with a clear pure tone of such beauty and displaying none of the plummy-ness which is unfortunately so often present with many English contraltos. Her voice, without amplification and against the full choir orchestra of Sir Henry Wood, was said to have filled the Royal Albert Hall with ease. Sir Thomas Beecham once said that

Clara Butt could be heard across the English Channel! What is certain is that singing in the small parish church of St. Mary's at North Stoke, she could, on a calm day, be heard quite clearly in Wallingford, over three miles away. Some have rather uncharitably described her voice as freak one; certainly she did have what appeared to be two distinct registers, her lower warm baritone range, and a point at which she made a characteristic audible change to the higher register, which is both light-toned and pure. This vocal gear change would today, of course, be frowned upon as a less than satisfactory singing technique; but it is the writer's opinion that this greatly adds to the charm and uniqueness of her style. Two delightful examples can be found on her recordings of Handel's *Ombra mai fu* from his opera *Xerxes* on Gramophone Monarch 03154 and *There's a Land* by Sir Frederick Cowen on Columbia 7321. Her vocal control was absolute. She sang with conviction and authority, displaying a superb legato, particularly in the works of Handel and Gluck. Yet such was her technique that she was equally at ease with music that required the most delicate touch. In her recording of Herbert Brewer's *The Fairy Pipers* on Columbia X227 she sings with an exquisite lightness and charm that is without equal. A *Fairy went a-marketing* on Columbia PB5 is another pleasing example of this. The singer's attention to phrasing and enunciation is such, that even on her early Gramophone Co. Ltd. acoustic recordings, no word escapes the listener's ears.

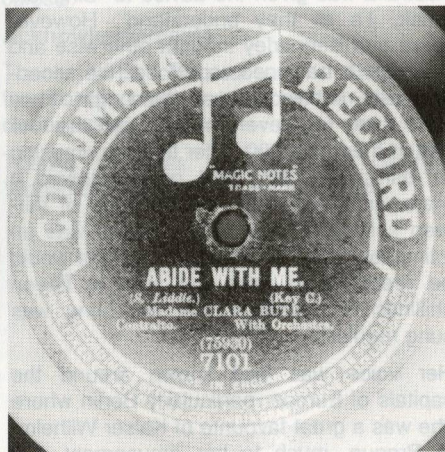
Although her repertoire included many operatic and classical works by Handel, Gluck and Mozart, she was principally a performer of the concert platform. While her critics claimed she was debasing her art, Clara Butt reached out to the widest possible audience and sang the songs they wanted to hear, popular Victorian ballads, sacred songs and patriotic favourites. This may be the reason why, from a historical point of



Mr and Mrs Kennerley Rumford and Family



Gramophone Monarch Record 03177



Columbia Record 7101

view, she tends to stand alone on the sidelines from the great immortals.

Land of Hope and Glory, which Sir Edward Elgar, at her suggestion, adapted into a song from his *Pomp and Circumstance March No.1*, became a second national anthem. This magnificent singer, standing a majestic six feet two inches tall and wrapped in a sweeping regal gown of red, white and blue, sang to loyal empire hearts. Elgar was one of her great admirers; he wrote his *Sea Pictures* for her, and she sang them for the first time at the Norwich Festival in 1899. Her recording of the beautiful *Where Corals Lie* on Columbia 7246 has yet to be excelled. It was in this year that Wolfson, the New York agent, arranged for her first highly successful tour of the U.S.A. and Canada. Travel was to become an important feature. With her husband and three children (all born by 1906) she made many tours of the Empire and U.S.A. Dame Nellie Melba, the celebrated Australian soprano, appeared to have a low opinion of the musical tastes of her fellow countrymen. When approached by Clara as to what to include in her programme for her forthcoming tour of Australia was given the advice to "Sing 'em muck, it's all they understand". However Clara and Kennerley thought otherwise and provided a balanced repertoire; the reception they received proved them right. They were away for eleven months, and the tour netted them £50,000. After this it is amusing to learn that Clara Butt once received a manuscript song with a remittance of thirteen shillings and sixpence. There was an intimation from the composer that he would be prepared to raise the sum to fifteen shillings on condition that the song was sung regularly.

Her voice was well known around the capitals of Europe, particularly Berlin where she was a great favourite of Kaiser Wilhelm. In Prague, much to her amusement, her name was advertised in its Bohemianised

form as Klary Buttové. All these tours proved to be very popular, and certainly did no harm to her record sales. Thousands of them frequently travelling with her in the same liner. Her Gramophone records were pressed by The Victor Talking Machine Co. in America. At some time in 1916 she changed over to the Columbia Graphophone Co. Ltd. and became their own celebrity singer. A number of operatic titles on the single-sided pink label 74000 series, (now quite rare) were followed with the familiar and prestigious purple label. She received a royalty of one shilling a record.

She made some lovely acoustic recordings with Sir Henry Wood. Gounod's *O Divine Redeemer* on 12" Columbia 7307 (matrix AX 553) is the one to look out for; it is really quite divine.

An interesting recording, which features Clara's three sisters, called *The Birth of the Flowers* on Columbia 7120 was specially written for them by Liza Lehmann. All the Butts had good voices, though Pauline and Hazel retired from professional engagements when they got married. Ethel, using her mother's maiden name of Hook, continued; her records can be found on the Aeolian Vocalion and Broadcast labels (there may be others). Clara Butt had an overwhelming commitment to her art, and studied Dvorák's *Biblical Songs* with the composer. It is difficult to find a performance to equal these recordings on Columbia X 335/6. The delightful lullaby *Husheen* was written for her by Alicia Needham and can be heard to great effect firstly on Gramophone Monarch 03152 and later on Columbia 7118.

There is one song with which her name will be forever associated. It was written as a hymn (supposedly on his death-bed) by the Reverend Henry Francis Lyte, to an indifferent tune by W. H. Monk. It was called *Abide With Me*. The words, based on a text from St. Luke, echo Victorian sentiment, are both

profound and sad, and yet there is hope. Samuel Liddle, Clara Butt's accompanist, set these words to music in a little over four hours. The song, written in 1897, remains a lasting commemoration to her name. Listening to the recording with its declamatory passages is oddly disturbing, and one has to prepare oneself for the drama that is to follow. So intense is the singer's utterance that the listener must steel himself against its awful power. She recorded the song many times with various accompaniments. The electrical recording with organ, made, towards the end of her life, at Christchurch, Westminster Road on Columbia 7374 is the one generally preferred.

During the Great war Clara Butt gave herself unstintingly in aid of its charities, giving many free concerts and recitals. She raised thousands of pounds for the Red Cross, and the beauty of her voice brought comfort to the many war-wounded and grieving families. In recognition of these services to her country she was created Dame Commander of the British Empire in 1920 by King George V. It was in this year she appeared in a memorable revival of *Orfeo ed Euridice* at Covent Garden under Sir Thomas Beecham. Whether Clara was singing opera or *The Keys of Heaven* with husband Kennerley Rumford, she seems to have found a special place of affection in the hearts of the British public. Details of her life are not easy to come by to-day; the writer would welcome any further information. An uncritical biography was published in 1928, written by Winifred Ponder.

With the introduction of electrical recording in 1925, the subsequent improvement in quality was unfortunately marked by some deterioration in Clara's voice. The lower register remained as warm as ever, but by this time she was experiencing some difficulty with her breathing, which affected the top register. The 1927 recordings made at

Central Hall, Westminster are a testament to this, though the enhanced reproduction quality does emphasise the superb technique, which the singer still retained.

Her life was impaired by much sadness. A Christian Scientist and a woman of great fortitude and religious conviction, she was able to bear the loss of both sons who predeceased her. She herself later became affected with cancer of the spine, and was in much pain. Her last records were made with her singing whilst sitting in a wheelchair. A few of her recordings were still available into the late 1950s, but sadly she had been relegated to the dark blue label.

Dame Clara Butt died at Prospect House, North Stoke on 23rd January 1936 in the same week as Rudyard Kipling and King George V. It was the end of an era.

Postscript

After Clara Butt's death Kennerley Rumford later remarried. His new wife was Dorothy Elwin (thirty years his junior). Rumford died in 1957. Joy Butt-Rumford, Clara's only daughter, married major Claude Cross I.M.S. They had one child, a boy. Clara's grandson died aged twelve from tuberculosis.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to EMI Records and to Alan Kelly for providing the material for the attached discography.

Thanks to Chris Hamilton and George Woolford for the loan of photographs.

Discography of The Gramophone Co. Ltd. recordings of Clara Butt

Matrix number	Single side Cat. no.	Double side Cat.no.	Title	Composer
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Maiden Lane, London 26th January 1899:

1070	4054		<i>Night Hymn at Sea</i> w. Kennerley Rumford (bar)	Goring Thomas
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Hayes, Middlesex 9th July 1909:

3434f	Not issued		No title	
3435f	Not issued		No title	
3436f	03187		<i>Four Years Old</i>	Trevalsa
	(Not used)			
3437f	Not issued		Duet with Kennerley Rumford	

Hayes, Middlesex 16th July 1909:

3481f	Not issued		<i>O Rest in the Lord</i> (Messiah)	Handel
3482f	Not issued		<i>The Lost Chord</i>	Sullivan
3482f-II	03153		<i>The Lost Chord</i>	Sullivan
3483f	03147		<i>Shepherd's Cradle Song</i>	Somervell
	(Not used)		<i>(Sleep Baby, Sleep)</i>	
3484f	Not issued		<i>Abide with Me</i>	Liddle
3485f	Not issued		<i>Land of Hope and Glory</i>	Elgar
3485f-I	Not issued		<i>Land of Hope and Glory</i>	Elgar
3485f-II	03151		<i>Land of Hope and Glory</i>	Elgar
3486f	03154		<i>Ombra mai fu*</i>	Handel
3487f	2-033010	AGSB 75	<i>Il Segreto*</i> (Lucrezia Borgia)	Donizetti
3488f	Not issued		<i>Il Segreto*</i> (Lucrezia Borgia)	Donizetti
3489f	Not issued		<i>O Don Fatale</i> (Don Carlos)	Verdi

Hayes, Middlesex 20th July 1909:

3498f	03157		<i>The Promise of Life*</i>	Cowen
3500f	03149		<i>Sweet and Low</i>	Somervell
	(Not used)			
3502f	04046		<i>Night Hymn at Sea*</i> w. Kennerley Rumford (bar)	Goring Thomas
3504f	2-033008		<i>Si mes vers avaient des ailes</i>	Reynaldo Hahn
3505f	03150		<i>The Leaves and The Wind**</i>	Leoni
3505f-II	03150		<i>The Leaves and The Wind**</i>	Leoni
3507f	Not issued		<i>My Treasure**</i>	Trevalsa
3508f	03148		<i>Kathleen Mavourneen</i>	Crouch
	(Not used)			
3509f	Not issued		<i>Kathleen Mavourneen</i>	Crouch
3510f	Not issued		<i>The Little Silver Ring**</i>	Chaminade
3510f-I	03156		<i>The Little Silver Ring**</i>	Chaminade
3511f	Not issued		<i>Husheen**</i>	Needham
3511f-I	Not issued		<i>Husheen**</i>	Needham
3511f-II	03152		<i>Husheen**</i>	Needham
3517f	04045		<i>Snowdrops**</i>	Lehmann

3518f	Not issued	<i>Believe me if all those endearing young charms</i>	L. Ronald
3518f-I	Not issued	<i>Believe me if all those endearing young charms</i>	L. Ronald
3518f-II	03155	<i>Believe me if all those endearing young charms w.pno acc. by the composer</i>	L. Ronald
3519f	2-033009	<i>Ame nesciri En Prière</i>	Scotto Fauré

Hayes, Middlesex 21st July 1909:

3522f	Not issued	<i>Land of Hope and Glory*</i>	Elgar
3523f	Not issued	<i>Divinités du Styx (Alceste)*</i>	Gluck
3524f	2-053005	<i>O Don Fatale (Don Carlos)</i>	Verdi
3527f	Not issued	<i>The Keys of Heaven w. Kennerley Rumford</i>	Broadwood

in all the above

* with orchestral accompaniment

** with piano accompaniment (probably Landon Ronald)

Hayes, Middlesex 16th September 1909:

3642f	Not issued	<i>The Keys of Heaven w. Kennerley Rumford acc. piano and organ</i>	Broadwood
3643f	Not issued	<i>Abide with Me acc. piano and organ</i>	Liddle
3644f	Not issued	<i>Cradle Song Sunday both w. piano</i>	Brahms Brahms
3645f	Not issued	<i>Das Mädchen Spricht Mein Mädel hat einen Rosenmund both w. piano</i>	Brahms Brahms
3646f	Not issued	<i>Abide with Me w.orch.</i>	Liddle
3647f	Not issued	<i>O Rest in the Lord (Elijah)</i>	Mendelssohn
3648f	Not issued	<i>O Rest in the Lord (Elijah)</i>	Mendelssohn
3649f	Not issued	<i>Divinités du Styx (Alceste)</i>	Gluck
3650f	Not issued	<i>Divinités du Styx (Alceste)</i>	Gluck
3651f	Not issued	<i>He Shall Feed His Flock (Messiah)</i>	Handel

Hayes, Middlesex 1st November 1909:

3793f	03168	Private record - no title
3794f		Private record - no title Mrs Kennerley Rumford and family

Hayes, Middlesex 17th January 1910:

4015f	Not issued	No title Clara, Ethel, Hazel and Pauline Butt
4016f	Not issued	as above
4017f	Not issued	as above
4018f	Not issued	as above

Hayes, Middlesex 7th February 1910:

4083f	Not issued	<i>He Shall Feed His Flock</i> (Messiah)*	Handel
4084f	03176	<i>He Shall Feed His Flock</i> (Messiah)*	Handel
4085f	03177	<i>O Rest in the Lord</i> (Elijah)*	Mendelssohn
4086f	03178	<i>Kathleen Mavourneen**</i>	Crouch
4087f	Not issued	Title not known	
4088f	03179	<i>Abide With Me***</i>	Liddle
4089f	03186	<i>Barbara Allen**</i>	Traditional
4090f	Not issued	<i>Barbara Allen</i>	Traditional
4091f	Not issued	<i>Woe unto Them</i>	
4092f	04060	<i>The Keys of Heaven**</i> w. Kennerley Rumford (bar)	Broadwood

Hayes, Middlesex 24th June 1910:

4239f	Not issued	<i>Sea Slumber Song</i>	Elgar
		<i>Sabbath Morning at Sea</i> (Sea Pictures)	
4240f	Not issued	<i>Der Wanderer**</i>	Schubert
4241f	Not issued	<i>Three Fishers</i>	John Hullah
4242f	Not issued	<i>Three Fishers</i>	John Hullah
4245f	Not issued	<i>Crown the King****</i> (Coronation Ode)	Elgar
4246f	Not issued	<i>Land of Hope and Glory</i>	Elgar
4247f	Not issued	<i>The Voice of the Father***</i>	Cowen
4248f	Not issued	<i>Cleansing Fires***</i>	Gabriel

Hayes, Middlesex 27th June 1910:

4249f	Not issued	<i>Barbara Allen*</i>	Traditional
4250f	Not issued	<i>Sweet Memories*</i>	

Hayes, Middlesex 1st July 1910:

4261f	Not issued	<i>Nearer to Thee</i>	
4262f	Not issued	<i>Peace and Rest</i>	P. Batten
4263f	Not issued	<i>Peace and Rest</i>	P. Batten

Hayes, Middlesex 28th October 1910:

4553f	Not issued	<i>Dear Love Mine (Nadeshda)</i> w. Kennerley Rumford	Goring Thomas
4554f	03221 (Not used)	<i>Peace and Rest***</i>	P. Batten
4555f	Not issued	<i>The Voice of the Father</i>	Cowen
4556f	Not issued	<i>The Voice of the father</i>	Cowen

Hayes, Middlesex 29th October 1910:

4557f	Not issued	<i>Three Fishers</i>	John Hullah
4558f	03222	<i>Three Fishers*</i>	John Hullah
4559f	03224	<i>Will He Come***</i>	Sullivan

4561f	03220	<i>Time's Garden w.</i>	Goring Thomas
		W. H. Squire (cello) & pno	
4562f	Not issued	<i>Time's Garden</i>	Goring Thomas
4563f	03223	<i>A Summer Night</i>	Goring Thomas
		w. W. H. Squire (cello)	
4564f	Not issued	<i>A Summer Night</i>	Goring Thomas

in all the * with orchestral accompaniment

above ** with piano accompaniment (probably by Landon Ronald)

*** with piano accompaniment (probably by Landon Ronald) and organ
(probably Stanley Roper)

Berlin, Germany 12th December 1910:

2118c	Not issued	<i>Lusinghe più care*</i>	Handel
		(Alessandro)	
2118½c	Not issued	<i>Lusinghe più care*</i>	Handel
		(Alessandro)	
2120c	Not issued	Title not known	
2123c	Not issued	<i>Die Forelle</i>	Schubert
		<i>Der Schmied</i>	Brahms
2124c	Not issued	<i>Erkönig</i>	Schubert
2125c	Not issued	<i>Der Wanderer</i>	Schubert

Berlin, Germany 19th December 1910:

2128c	Not issued	<i>Caro mio ben</i>	Giordani
2128½c	2-053210	<i>Caro mio ben*</i>	Giordani
2129c	Not issued	<i>Mon Coeur s'ouvre à</i>	Saint-Saëns
		<i>ta voix (Samson et Dalila)</i>	
2130c	2-053213	<i>O Don Fatale (Don Carlos)</i>	Verdi
2131c	Not issued	<i>In Questa Tomba Obscura</i>	Beethoven
2132c	2-053209	<i>Brindisi (Lucrezia Borgia)*</i>	Donizetti
2133c	Not issued	<i>Sapphische Ode</i>	Brahms

Hayes, Middlesex 5th January 1911:

4739f	Not issued	Clara Butt & Co.
		Quartet - No title
4740f	Test	as above - No title
4741f	Test	as above - No title
4742f	Test	as above - No title

Hayes, Middlesex 24th April 1911:

z4969f	Not issued	<i>God Save The King</i>	Elgar
z4970f	03240	<i>God Save The King</i>	Elgar
z4971f	Not issued	<i>Land of Hope and Glory</i>	Elgar
z4972f	03239	<i>Land of Hope and Glory</i>	Elgar
z4973f	Not issued	<i>Land of Hope and Glory</i>	Elgar
z4974f	03243	<i>Land of Hope and Glory</i>	Elgar

(Not for sale)

all w. Coldstream Guards Band cond. J. Mackenzie-Rogan

Hayes, Middlesex 16th July 1912:

Ac6341f	03283	<i>My Ain Folk</i>	
Ac6342f	Not issued	<i>My Ain Folk</i>	
Ac6343f	Not issued	<i>Knights</i>	Maud Valérie White
Ac6344f	Not issued	<i>A Youth Once Loved a Maiden</i>	Maud Valérie White
		<i>The Tears That Night</i>	Maud Valérie White
Ac6345f	Not issued	<i>Daddy</i>	Behrend

Hayes, Middlesex 17th July 1912:

Ac6346f	Not issued	<i>The Better Land</i>	Cowen
Ac6347f	Not issued	<i>There is a Green Hill</i>	Gounod
Ac6348f	Not issued	<i>There is a Green Hill</i>	Gounod
Ac6349f	Not issued	<i>Come unto Me</i>	Batten
Ac 6350f	Not issued	<i>Three Score and Ten</i>	Trevalsa

Hayes, Middlesex 24th July 1912:

Ac6378f	Not issued	<i>Sabbath Morning at Sea</i> (Sea Pictures) w. orch.	Elgar
Ac6379f	Not issued	<i>Lusinghe più care</i> (Alessandro) w. orch.	Handel
Ac6380f	Not issued	<i>Lusinghe più care</i> (Alessandro) w. orch.	Handel
Ac6381f	2-053076	<i>Lusinghe più care</i> (Alessandro) w. orch.	Handel
Ac6382f	2-053088	AGSB 75 <i>Rend' il sereno al ciglio</i> (Sosarme)	Handel
Ac6383f	Not issued	<i>Where Corals Lie</i> (Sea Pictures)	Elgar
Ac6384f	03299	<i>Where Corals Lie</i> (Sea Pictures)	Elgar

Hayes, Middlesex 25th July 1912:

Ac6388f	Not issued	<i>Women of Ivor</i>	Loughborough
Ac6389f	03305	<i>Women of Ivor</i>	Loughborough
Ac6390f	Not issued	<i>My Dear Zone</i> (A Wessex Love Song)	Sanderson
Ac6391f	Not issued	<i>My Dear Zone</i> (A Wessex Love Song)	Sanderson
Ac6392f	03368	<i>A Youth Once Loved a Maiden</i> <i>The Tears that Night</i>	Maud Valérie White

in all the above, with Harold Craxton (pno)

Hayes, Middlesex 10th November 1914:

AL8149f	Not issued	<i>O Divine Redeemer</i>	Gounod
AL8150f	Not issued	<i>O Divine Redeemer</i>	Gounod
AL8151f	Not issued	<i>Light of the World</i>	Sullivan
AL8152f	Not issued	<i>Light of the World</i>	Sullivan

AL8153f Not issued
 AL8154f Not issued
 AL8155f Not issued
 AL8156f Not issued

The Home Flag
Land of Hope and Glory
Land of Hope and Glory
Land of Hope and Glory

Craxton
 Elgar
 Elgar
 Elgar

Hayes, Middlesex 11th November 1914:

AK18491e Not issued
 AK18492e 2-3056

My Son
My Son
 w. Harold Craxton (pno) &
 Stanley Roper (organ)
The Fairy Pipers
 w. celeste
The Fairy Pipers
 w. piano

del Riego
 del Riego

AK18493e Not issued

Brewer

AK18494e Not issued

Brewer

Hayes, Middlesex 2nd March 1915:

Ho666c Not issued

God Shall Wipe Away
All Tears

Sullivan

Ho667c 03399

(Light of the World)
God Shall Wipe Away
*All Tears**

Sullivan

Ho668c 03425

(Light of the World)
*O Divine Redeemer**

Gounod

Ho669c Not issued

O Divine Redeemer

Gounod

Ho670c 03510

*Land of Hope and Glory**

Elgar

*w. orch. cond. A. Godfrey

Note (1): The gaps in matrix numbers are taken up with recordings of Kennerley Rumford

Note (2): "not used" is the phrase which appears in the recording ledgers

Forthcoming Meetings in London

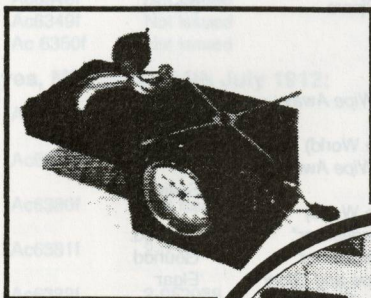
London Meetings are held at the National Sound Archive, 29 Exhibition Road, South Kensington, on the third Thursday evening of the month promptly at **6.45pm** (unless stated otherwise). Members' attention is drawn to the London Meetings Notice on page 100 of issue 188 (October 1992).

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| June 16th | Bridget Duckenfield, the author of <i>O Lovely Knight</i> , will talk on <i>The Many Sides of Landon Ronald</i> |
| July 21st | <i>A Demonstration of World Records</i> by Frank Andrews & George Woolford on original equipment |
| August 18th | Dominic Combe: a programme with cylinders. Details to be announced in next issue |
| September 15th | George Glasiris. Details to be announced later |
| October 20th | George Woolford on <i>1905 and Patti</i> |
| November 17th | Joe Pengelly will talk about his latest design of cylinder playing machine and let us hear some of the cylinders he has transcribed to tape using this machine |
| December 15th | Geoff Edwards. Details to be announced later |

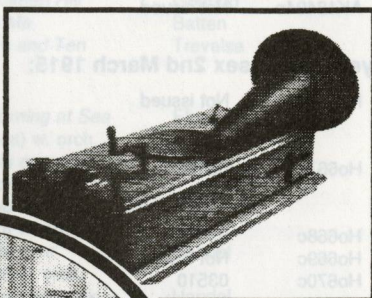
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PHONOFAIR 1994

Once again the Society's annual Phonofair was held at Fairfield's School, Trinity Avenue, Northampton on 16th April. Ruth Lambert once again displayed her customary organisational flair and ran this event superbly. With the help of her family and friends the punters were provided with parking space for their cars and provided with excellent catering facilities at reasonable cost.

There was a large variety of stalls covering almost every aspect of our hobby. There was plenty to cater for the machine enthusiast with models ranging from the usual Columbia and HMV portables to the Pathé Elf. Phonographs for sale appeared on several stalls. There were stalls selling all sorts of spare parts. The needle tin specialist was well catered for at Ruth's stall. There were hundreds if not thousands of records on offer at numerous stalls. I found one or two labels I had not come across before, to add to my label collection. LPs are beginning to make a larger impact at the Phonofair. I suppose this is an inevitable consequence of them having supplanted by CD. I suspect it will not be too long before the equipment for playing LPs will be joining phonographs and gramophones on the stalls at such fairs. The Society's own stall selling items from the Booklist was run by Don Moore with occasional help from Richard Taylor, who had the adjacent stall. Thanks to Don's efforts the Society made substantial sales.

Many of the stall holders I chatted to were well satisfied with their trading. One or two told me that the clientèle at our Phonofairs usually buy more from them than those punters at the other fairs. Once again, on behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank Ruth and her team for their hard effort into making this such a successful event and for providing a handsome surplus for the Society's funds. Thanks are also due to all who attended, for without them the Phonofair would be rather a damp squib. Finally I would like to thank Arthur George for providing the photographs.

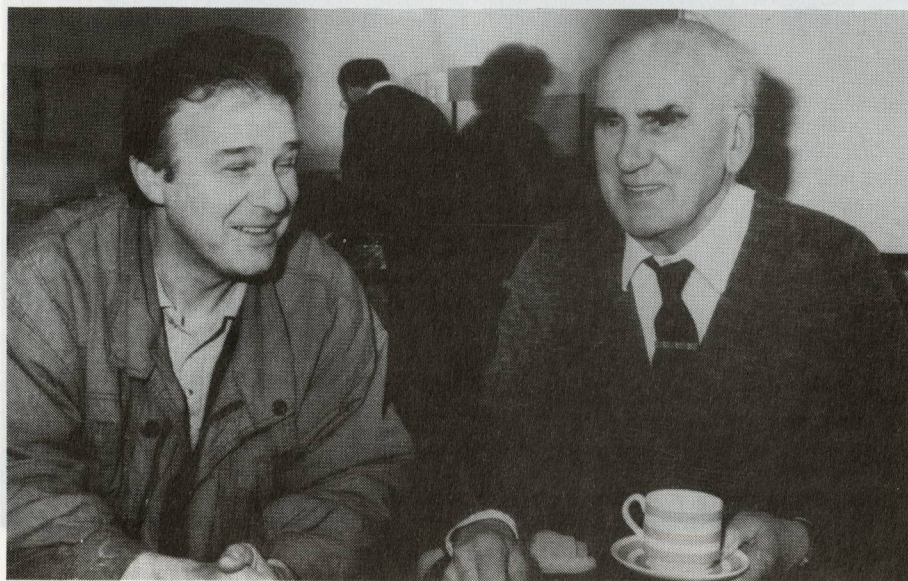
Chris Hamilton



Comparing their purchases over a refreshment



The Reverend Alan Davies and his wife compare notes with Miles and Ann Mallinson



Stan North and George Frow chat over a cup of tea

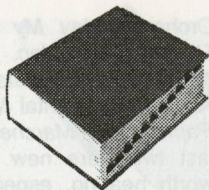


Chris Hamilton, Len Watts and Frank Andrews discussing the finer points of Pathé records



Chasing that elusive bargain

REVIEW



THE GREAT

HARRY RESER by W. W. Triggs

Until this book arrived for review I had little idea of how important a figure Harry Reser was in the world of popular music. Virtually all I knew of him was that he had a dance band and made some records, one or two of which I had in my own collection.

Harrison Franklin Reser was born on the 17th January 1896 in Piqua, Ohio. When he was two his parents moved to Dayton, Ohio. There he was brought up and went to Steele High School. It was soon discovered that the young Harry Reser had perfect pitch. After finding that he had learnt to play the guitar by himself, his parents decided to have Harry musically educated. He became a pupil of Louis Hein and Albert Fischer of Dayton where he learnt to play the violin, violoncello and piano.

He took his first job, at the age of 16, as the pianist at the summer resort of Rhea Springs, Tennessee. He married at the age of 20 in April 1916. After Christmas 1920 he went to New York City to seek engagements. Word soon spread of his ability and the jobs came pouring in. By the autumn of 1922 he had cut his first records and he was playing with many of the important bandleaders of the day such as Ben Selvin, Bennie Krueger, Sam Lanin, Nathan Glantz, Mike Markel and Paul Whiteman.

He had decided to form his own groups and the first of these was the Okeh Syncopators created as a result of his contract with the Okeh Phonograph Co. He subsequently led many bands, all of which are listed in this book.

In 1923 he visited this country with the Paul Whiteman Orchestra, where he was employed as the banjoist. His banjo was autographed by His Majesty King George V. He returned to the U.S.A. in August 1923 after his contract with Paul Whiteman finished.

He continued to perform until his death on 27th August 1965.

In this book, the author Bill Triggs, as well as giving a comprehensive biography of Harry Reser, devotes a chapter to Reser's musical and technical ability. Bill lists all of the Reser recordings he knew about. He devotes a chapter to each of the record companies that Reser was associated with. The number of records Reser made must run into hundreds; I lost count, there were so many. The book is full of photographs of Reser, his bands, some of his concert programmes and several of the title covers of the songs his bands played and several other illustrations. Bill wrote a musical tribute to Harry Reser, the music of which is included in the book. This hard-back book is beautifully printed on glossy art paper and is an absolute mine of information. It gives an excellent insight into the world of popular music in the U.S.A. from the early years of the century to well after the second world war. I can thoroughly recommend it and it is a bargain at **£17.50** including postage (U.K.) and **\$47** including air post overseas. It is available direct from the author W. W. Triggs, [redacted]

[redacted] Bath BA3 4QH,
U.K.

For readers interested in hearing the music of Harry Reser for themselves Bill Triggs is selling a series of cassettes of Harry Reser. Full details can be had from Bill at the above address. (Please enclose S.A.E.)

Chris Hamilton

REVIEW



The Victory Bands (1928 - 1931) Part 2

Poppy Records have just issued Part 2 of The Victory Bands (1928 - 1931). In addition to George Cathie and His Band, the Harry Maquilty Band, The Band of His Majesty's Irish Guards and Petersen's Band (all of whom were to be heard on the Part 1 cassette) we discover on this cassette that the Victory band was also a pseudonym for Annunzio Mantovani and His Orchestra, Justin Ring and His Orchestra, Jay Wilbur and His Orchestra and Simon Wurm and His Orchestra.

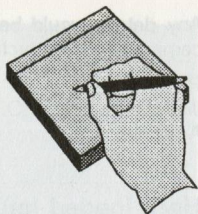
Once again I had a most enjoyable time listening to this cassette, as many tunes I had not heard for years were once again pouring through my loudspeakers. *Il Corricolo*, *Cuckoo - Galop*, *Scotch Jigs No. 1* and *Dancing Dervish* are splendidly rendered by the Harry Maquilty Band. Petersen's Band are in top form with *Orpheus - Galop* and the *Mazurka* from Delibes' ballet *Coppélia*. The Band of His Majesty's Irish Guards show that they have some Gaelic blood in them with their performance of *Scotch Medley No. 1*. Justin Ring and his Orchestra, who are an American outfit, perform a tune I had not heard before, *La Marche des Enfants*. Simon Wurm and His Orchestra give spirited performances of *King Charles March* (incorporating *God Save The King*) and the *Bajaderentanz* from Anton Rubinstein's opera *Feramors*. Annunzio Mantovani and His Orchestra prove they are excellent performers of the music of Johann Strauss in their performance of *Morgenblätter*. George Cathie and His

Orchestra play *My Little Caravan*, *Grand Duchess - Galop*, *Ancient Gigue*, *War March of the Priests* (from Mendelssohn's *Athalie* - Incidental Music Op.74), *Tangier*, *Paprika* and *Marche aux Flambeaux*. The last two were new to me but were well worth hearing, especially *Paprika*. George Cathie finishes this excellent cassette with an absolutely rousing performance of *Post Horn Galop* in which the band members add their vocal contributions with gusto!

The originals of many of the above recordings were pretty worn and once again Adrian Tuddenham demonstrates his skill as a transfer engineer by making these recordings sound so acceptable. The collector is again offered the choice of either a normal cassette with written notes or a cassette with spoken notes (an excellent idea for those whose sight is not as good as it was or who are blind). I can thoroughly recommend this cassette which is available from **Poppy Records**, 88, Mount Road, Southdown, Bath, Somerset BA2 1LH at **£5.99 including postage**. The numbers are **GXP002** (written notes) and **GXP002/N** (narrated notes).

Chris Hamilton

LETTERS



Edison Bell and Pathé Films

Dear Chris,

Quite recently I found the 10-inch Edison Bell Winner Record 4554 of *Land of Hope and Glory* spread over both sides. It is sung by Raymond Newell with a chorus comprising Dan Jones, Edward Halland, Gerald Adams, John Lovering, Tom Barratt, Robert Carr and Stanley Kirkby and 2,000 lusty London voices in *The Prince of Wales Playhouse Cinema*, Lewisham. It was recorded on Armistice Day, November 11th 1926 on matrices 10467/8 and issued in the following January and is adequately recorded for its time.

In the Karlo Adrian - Arthur Badrock listing, with added material from Andrews and Bayly, the record is marked as being the first 'outside' or Electric Distance Recording of Edison Bell; but as much part of technical history is the line on the Part 1 label: "synchronised with Pathé Song Film".

It is a fact that Edison Bell used to manufacture the sound discs for the Universal Talking Newsreel around 1930, but the Peckham company's participation in the discs for sound films in the developing days of the American Vitaphone in 1926 will be new to many. *The Jazz Singer* was not shown until October 6th 1927. How the Pathé film and Edison Bell record were locked together is not apparent from looking through British patent abridgements of the time and no reference books give Edison Bell a mention. Earlier attempts at synchronisation, such as Hepworth's Vivaphone in Britain and Edison's Kinetophone in America had been abandoned for many years and the experts were well into getting optical sound onto film.

It would be interesting if any other Winners of those times have been noted by members as marked for accompanying films, and if anything is known of the subjects.

As for Electrical Distance Recording this particular Winner Record is mentioned by P. G. A. H. Voigt in his account of technical life at Edison Bell in *The Gramophone* for November 1965 p.270. The singing was relayed to the Peckham works of the company by telephone line, a distance of 8 miles through local exchanges. Voigt broadly describes his amplification circuits, regretting he did not patent these, but there seemed to be no commercial market for such circuits at the time. Electrical Distance Recording was used on subsequent Edison Bell records, for instance cinema organs in situ, and I have a pencilled and undated sketch by him headed 'lorry layout' on a grubby piece of graph paper that is unfortunately not reproducible. This depicts a mobile recording studio 14ft. long by 6ft. broad and specifying 140v. 20amp. storage batteries charged by a dynamo driven from the engine or from the mains through a universal motor. The current was needed for ovens, lights and suction drive.

Do any members have knowledge of this being built and used?

Yours sincerely,
George Frow, Sevenoaks, Kent.

Autographed Masters

Dear Chris,

Regarding David Riches' letter in *Hillandale News* 196 about *Gracie's and Sandy's Party*, several years ago I bought a 10" 78 also at a car boot sale. This one is Imperial 2278 (Picture Label), *Jack Payne's Party*. Around the label are the signatures of the artists Jay Wilbur, Leslie Sarony, Bob and Alf Pearson, Foster Richardson, Jack Payne, Leslie Holmes and Florrie Forde. It seems to date from the early 1930s.

I also have a copy of Amy Johnson's *The Story of My Flight* (Columbia DB 189), on which her signature appears under the label. I wonder how prevalent this practice was as I have seen very few examples.

Yours sincerely,
K. G. O'Sullivan, Sudbury, Suffolk
(Many Berliners and most of the acoustic Fonotipias have the artistes' signature in the wax and some early Columbias of artists like 'Emmy Destinn,

Giovanni Zenatello and Vladimir de Pachmann are also similarly inscribed. Chris Barlow of Lowestoft informs me that many of Marek Weber's Parlophones have his signature inscribed in the wax. Ed.]

Any details would be greatly appreciated concerning dance instructions or discography.

Regards,
Jim Dangarfield, [REDACTED] 2284,
Australia

Phonovision Discs

Dear Editor,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have kindly written to me about Phonovision, especially the N.B.T.V.A. (Narrow Band Television Association). As so few discs are known, I have been asked to appeal for any which may have found their way into private collections.

The discs apparently have either a Columbia Test record label of the usual white kind, or else a perfectly plain white label with handwritten details. These details may not be readily identifiable, but the playing surface will be. As Doug Pitt says, the appearance is of three similar sectors, because the recording turntable was geared to encode exactly three frames per revolution. Any attempt to play them would give a wailing sound at about 375Hz.

If anyone should find such a disc, Mr Jeremy Jago, of the N.B.T.V.A., would be very keen to hear of it. The Editor has his address.

By the way, I found Christopher Proudfoot's information on the production dates of gramophones both interesting and helpful - can he be persuaded to tell us more, particularly for the period before 1925?

Yours sincerely,
Martyn Dowell, Freemantle, Southampton

Help Please!

Dear Chris,

At present I am researching the Old Time Dance Series of recordings Harry Davidson and His Orchestra. A large number of the discs were imported into Australia during the 1950s. I was wondering if any of the Society's members would know if a Dance Companion (instruction of dances) was published with the release of the recordings? At present I am working with a dance co-ordinator who is to organise a ball later this year and this may be a good opportunity to get some old dances back into circulation.

Horn loaded loudspeakers

Dear Chris,

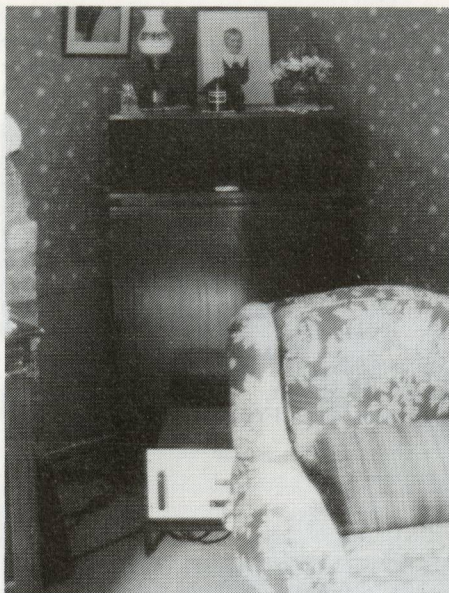
I enclose some details of the loudspeakers used with my 'high-end' hi-fi system. They are three-way **horn loaded Klipschorns** that retail for about £4,000. Members of C.L.P.G.S. may be surprised to learn that horn type loudspeakers are still alive and well. Modern reasons for using the principles of horn loading are for superb dynamics, revealing the 'inner voice' detail of instruments and the human voice, better stereo imaging and depth of stereo image. Distortion products like frequency modulation distortion are much reduced compared to modern baffle type loudspeakers.

The modern serious hi-fi loudspeaker manufacturers are now using horn loading principles in some of their products after decades of ignoring the horn approach. Audiophiles, like myself, got very tired of the limited products that were available. Horn loaded speaker cabinets are expensive to make due to their complexity, but the market is prepared to pay for something better. As sound sources have improved, as amplifiers had improved, loudspeakers had not.

My hi-fi is true audiophile, not the Dixon's or Curry's type of low-fi midi systems. The equipment I have cost in the region of £30,000 - serious kit indeed! The amplification is a mixture of modern solid state and **valves!** This gives the best uncoloured sound.

Should you or other members want to come and hear state of the art sound in the home, you are most welcome.

Yours truly,
Peter E. Yates, Cambridgeshire
{Dedication indeed! The amount of money Peter has spent in pursuing his quest for perfect sound reproduction would buy a small flat or apartment here in Fife! If anyone wishes to take Peter up on his offer to demonstrate his system please write to me and I'll pass on their letter to Peter. I did not publish his full address in case *Hillandale News* fell into the wrong hands and led to his home being burgled. Ed.]



One of Peter Yates' Klipschorn loudspeakers

Can any member help?

Dear Mr Hamilton,

I am a person who likes very much to delve into old records - both of the recorded shellac, and the written recorded variety - so no dingy old basement is too musty for me to poke around in. My researches have been mainly concentrated on the 1920s, 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, but whenever possible to look back even further, I do.

I need to contact people who might have been in the popular music business at this time, ranging from the record producing/manufacturing side of things to the record selling end. Can you think of any society members who may have been involved in this way? Another point of contact, if you know of any, may be surviving relatives of the same, bearing in mind that they may have inherited original archival material relating to sales/figures/performance, from their forebears.

Yours sincerely,

John Kobylecky, Newmarket, Suffolk

{If any one can help please write to John care of myself and I will pass on any correspondence. Ed.}

Who is it?

Dear Chris,

I enclose a turn-of-the-century postcard of an attractive lady. This was included in a group of postcards of that period showing musicians such as Melba, Kubelik etc. So perhaps the lady is a musician of those times? Can anyone help?

Yours sincerely,

George Taylor, Harrogate, North Yorkshire

{If you send your replies to me I'll pass them on to George Taylor. Ed.}



George Taylor's unknown lady

Information please?

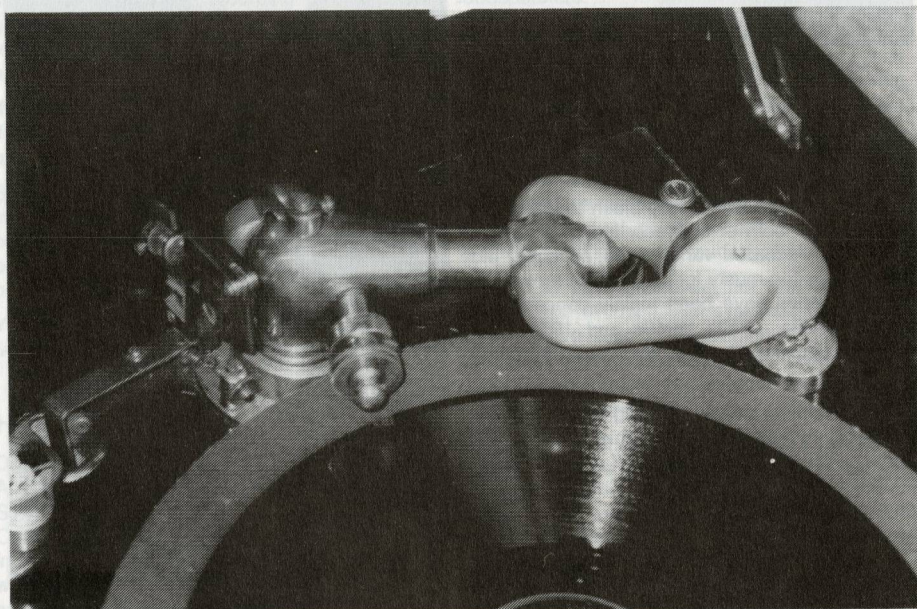
Dear Sir,

On a recent occasion when I strayed into an antique fair I was immediately smitten by an exquisite little cabinet gramophone in mahogany with a boxwood inlay. The cabinet is only some 19 inches high. Unusually it has a door at the back as well as the front and is complete with keys for each lock. The motor is a substantial double-spring Garrard. The most unusual feature to me is the heavy brass and aluminium tone arm and sound-box, the like of which I have not seen before. The tone arm carries a heavy brass cam which is clearly intended to operate the automatic stop and start mechanism but does not, since there appears to be a part missing. Thinking that I might be able to get some drawings from the patents office in Leeds (they

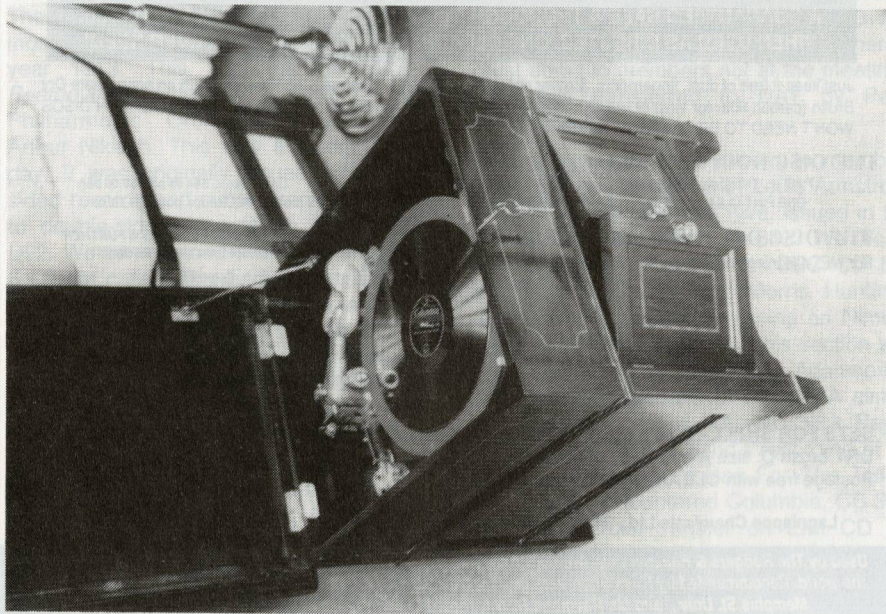
charge a lot less than the London office), I telephoned them with the name of the machine which is *The Bassanophone*. I was also able to give them the patent numbers, which are 1799-08 and 21350-09. Unfortunately they were unable to recognise the numbers and could not investigate further without patent dates which I do not have. Does any member have any information on this delightful machine? I would be most pleased to have any comments. At the same sale I picked up a large cabinet *Baxter-phone* which is a good quality machine with some Art Deco features. Anyone know anything about this machine?

Yours faithfully,

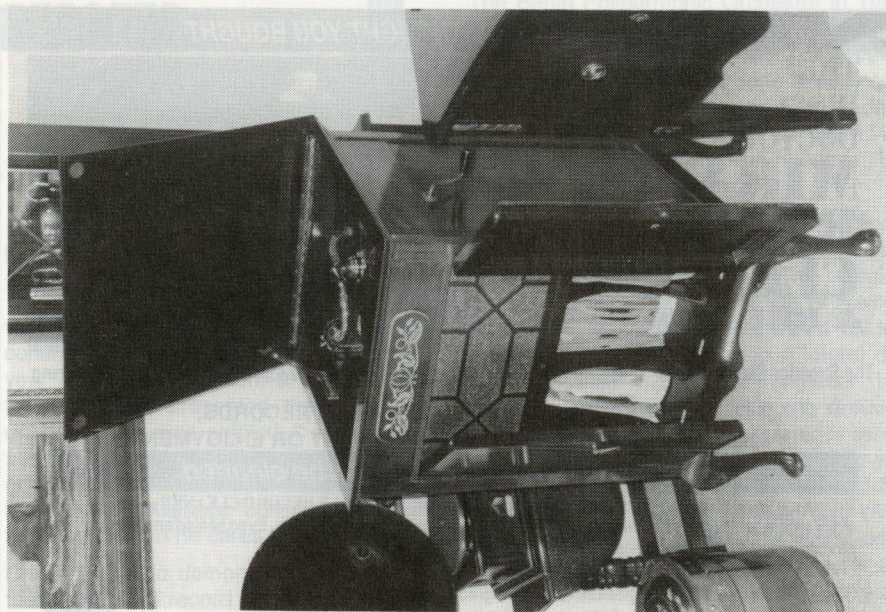
John McGlynn, [REDACTED]
Blackpool, Lancs. FY3 8ND



A close up of the motor board, tone arm and sound-box of John McGlynn's *The Bassanophone*



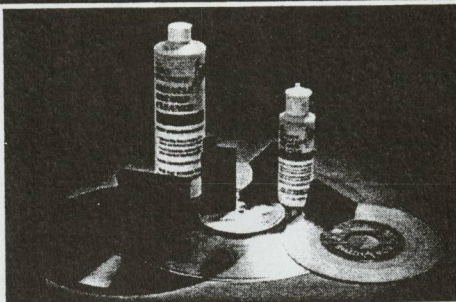
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REPORTS



London Meeting, 19th March 1994

Our London meetings continue to attract larger audiences this year and Chris Hamilton, a Scottish name familiar to all, presented the March programme. This was entitled *It is not what it seems*. From a childhood present of a gramophone and six records, Chris has been an enthusiastic collector for..., well more years than he cares to remember!

Chris set out to demonstrate how some of the commercial record companies' attempts at transferring historical recordings to LP and CD were neither musical nor an accurate reproduction of the original recording. The illustrations commenced with HMV's most ambitious recording project up to the year 1913. This was the recording of *Beethoven's Symphony No.5* with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Arthur Nikisch. This was a landmark in its day. It was originally issued on 8 single-sided records and subsequently transferred to double-sided records on HMV D89 to D92. We commenced with a transfer from a 5 LP set called *The Early Years* issued by Deutsche Grammophon issued in the late 1960s. Wonderful muffled sounds emerged! This was followed by a transfer issued on LP by Electrola (1C 053-1 466) a few years later. This gave a slightly less muffled sound and more individual instruments could be heard. There were some curious thuds to be heard, which Chris assured us were the timpani! Another transfer, also from Electrola (RLS 768) issued by EMI Records Ltd to celebrate the centenary of

The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in 1982, was better still and a much clearer sound came from the loudspeakers. However it was only when a transfer, done directly onto DAT (Digital Audio Tape) by Peter Adamson from Schallplatte 040784 were the sounds locked in the grooves released. The dull thuds were actually drums!

Chris, having whetted the audience's appetite, played one of Brunswick's most memorable transfers. This was The Original Dixieland Jazz Band's recording of *Reisenweber Rag* for Vocalion. This was a 'hill and dale' recording transferred to a lateral disc on Brunswick 0250. The engineer had problems with his stylus skipping grooves. The transfer was released regardless resulting in an appalling sound. The music was almost unrecognisable! Chris followed this with a transfer from the original disc (Aeolian 1242) by John R. T. Davies on a Fountain LP (FJ 1013). A much clearer and more enjoyable sound ensued giving the audience much pleasure.

In a similar vein Symposium's CD transfer of Kurt Weill's *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*, recorded in 1931 on Polydor 24172/3 was compared with the originals - and here I must admit to members not at the meeting - splendidly transferred to DAT by Peter Adamson.

Another recording well known to members is *St. James Infirmary* with Louis Armstrong and His Savoy Ballroom Five, issued in this country on Parlophone R 643. We heard Robert Parker's transfer on BBC CD 597 and compared this with Morris Hunting's transfer from a vinylite pressing on Nimbus Hermes 6002. Chris ended this section with another fine transfer by Peter Adamson to DAT from Chris' copy of R 643. A similar exercise was carried out with Jack Payne and His BBC Dance Band's recording of *My Brother Made The Noises For The Talkies* on a rarely encountered Columbia, CB 317. The commercial transfer on EMI CD CC 206 was compared with Peter Adamson's DAT transfer. Once again Peter Adamson's

transfer was far more revealing and enjoyable.

Many years ago when Jack de Manio ran the Radio 4 *Today* programme a famous complaint was made regarding the BBC engineers' test transmissions of *The Teddy Bears' Picnic*. Those listeners who left valve receivers on overnight to be awakened by the shipping forecast at 5.45 am were disturbed by Henry Hall and the BBC Dance Orchestra in full flight! Issued as Columbia DB 955 it was compared with the transfer on EMI CDS 791255-2. Interesting problems with microphone distortion were revealed.

The baritone Lawrence Tibbett recorded the well-known aria *Largo al Factotum* from Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* for Victor in 1930. We compared the usual HMV Hayes pressing with a transfer on BBC CD 715 and in this case the audience obviously preferred the 'crackly' original pressing.

Vladimir Horowitz recorded Schumann's *Fantasiestücke No.7; Traumeswirren* for HMV in 1932. This recording on HMV DA 1353 was compared with an early LP transfer on HMV COLH 72, with a Pathé Marconi LP transfer by Keith Hardwick and with the same Keith Hardwick transfer processed with CEDAR and issued on CD on EMI CHS 763538-2. Here the audience picked out some odd effects and a 'metallic sound' that were not apparent on Peter Adamson's transfer of the original.

Chris ended with *The Lambeth Walk* by Gay and Furber in the 1938 recording by Ambrose and his Orchestra on Decca F 6882. This was compared with the transfer by Colin Brown on the CD ASV CD AJA 5066. Once again the Peter Adamson transfer scored heavily over the commercial one!

As previously mentioned all the above originals were expertly transferred by Peter Adamson to DAT for Chris, whose lively commentary made the evening appear far too short, leaving the audience craving for more. We must applaud Chris for an

excellent choice of subject and I hope he unearths some other interesting comparisons for us to digest on some future occasion.

George Woolford

London Meeting, 21st April 1994

In his introduction to his presentation Norman White of Nimbus Records dealt in detail with the problems of lifting sound from 78 records with the question "how did we get it wrong for so long?" and proceeded to describe his method of getting over this, justifying going back to early methods and improving techniques with today's knowledge, by maintaining that a properly tuned sound-box is unbeatable in reproducing from such records, especially the vocal ones. By the very nature of volume and bass recording on pre-war electric 78s he had found that using an electric pick-up left out many of the tones. His method of playing thorn needles in a tuned EMG sound-box with a long exponential horn was described in some detail in April's *Hillandale News* by Miles Mallinson, and some of the results Norman played to the meeting with a stunning brilliance, the microphone being a foot or two in front of the centre of the horn. This had been originally developed for the transfer of Caruso's ensemble recordings and set up in a ballroom that has fine acoustics and gave an effect of voice separation.

The records demonstrated reflected many types of voice and were as follows:

Donizetti's *Sonnambula: Ah! Non Giunge* w. Tetrizzini (r.1911)

Verdi's *Rigoletto: Bella Figlia Dell'Amore* w. Caruso and ensemble (r.1908)

Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana: Introduction* w. Mascagni/ *O Lola!* w. Gigli (r.1940)

Rossini's *Barber of Seville: Una Voce Poco Fa* w. Galli-Curci (r.1917)

Traditional Old Irish Air (arr. Hughes):
Norah O'Neale w. John McCormack (un-
published) (r.1929)

Weber's Oberon: *O Ocean thou mighty
monster* w. Kirsten Flagstad (r.1937)

Massenet's Werther: *La Nature* w. Tita
Schipa (r.1942)

Puccini's Turandot: *Nessun Dorma* w.
Jussi Björling (r.1944)

Norman White said that a recital room built
in the grounds of Nimbus' headquarters at
Wyastone Leys was now where the 78
transfers were made, and we heard some-
thing of the search for silent surfaces and
the selection of thorns to suit these. Pitch
was always a problem; did the old singers
transpose? A lot of guessing had to go into
this, but all involved in the transfers had a
love of great singing.

We are grateful for such an entertaining
speaker and his colleague from Monmouth,
and for giving members such a memorable
evening. All were reluctant to go home but
were able to take a CD compilation of Prima
Voce titles recorded using the techniques
Norman described.

A London Correspondent

OBITUARY

Bernard Thurling

Many readers of *Hillandale News* will have known
Bernard Thurling, a dedicated collector of 78s.
Bernard took early retirement in order to devote
more time to his records. Sadly on March 30th
1994, Bernard passed away aged 64.

I met Bernard three years ago when I was invited
to join his "record club" that consisted of Bernard,
Bill Morris, Eric Smith, David Burkit and Dick
Harding. During that time we met as a group
every six weeks or so, each of us hosting an
evening in our homes, where we played and
discussed our choice of records. We all particu-
larly looked forward to Bernard's Evenings be-
cause we always knew that we were in for a
treat. He owned rare and exquisite Opera arias
and unusual early discs and was an avid
collector of rare and unusual labels. Despite the
lack of space (due to the fact that he lived in a
mobile home, which we all joked would never
blow away due to the sheer weight of records
contained therein!), Bernard always made us feel
extremely welcome and had a quiet dignity that is
so rare today. We could play him almost any
record and he could identify the artist, show him
any label and he could usually date the record
without reference to dating guides.

Bernard was the world authority on Hans Heinz
Bollmann, the German tenor. He introduced
Bollman's voice to many collectors and compiled
his discography.

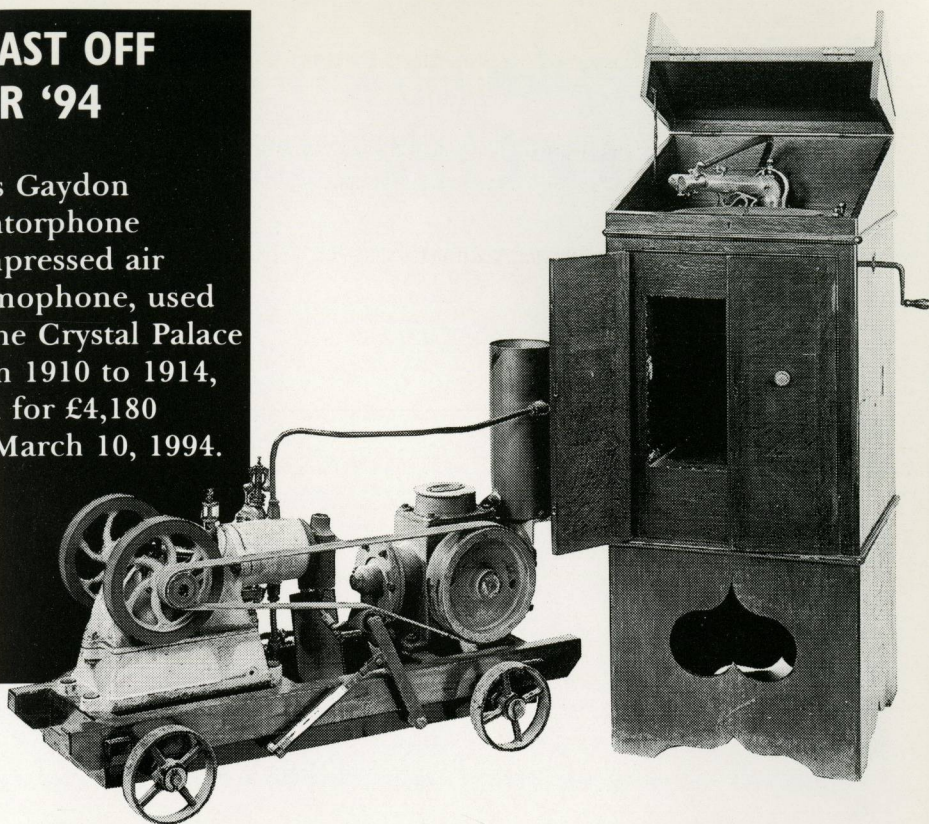
Last year Bernard and his "club" participated in a
television programme about record collectors and
enthusiasts. The programme was screened on
Anglia Television late last year. Bernard was
given more air time than the other collectors and
the programme ended with Bernard playing Hans
Heinz Bollmann and Manfred Lewandowski sing-
ing the duet from Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers*, and
saying that the happiest moments of his life had
been spent with his records. The programme has
proven to be a fitting tribute to Bernard.

He will be sadly missed by all of his "record club",
and by all those who knew him.

Juliet Adams

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Enquiries: Christopher Proudfoot on [REDACTED]

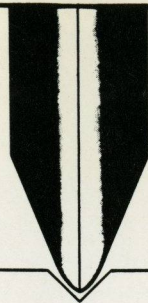
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